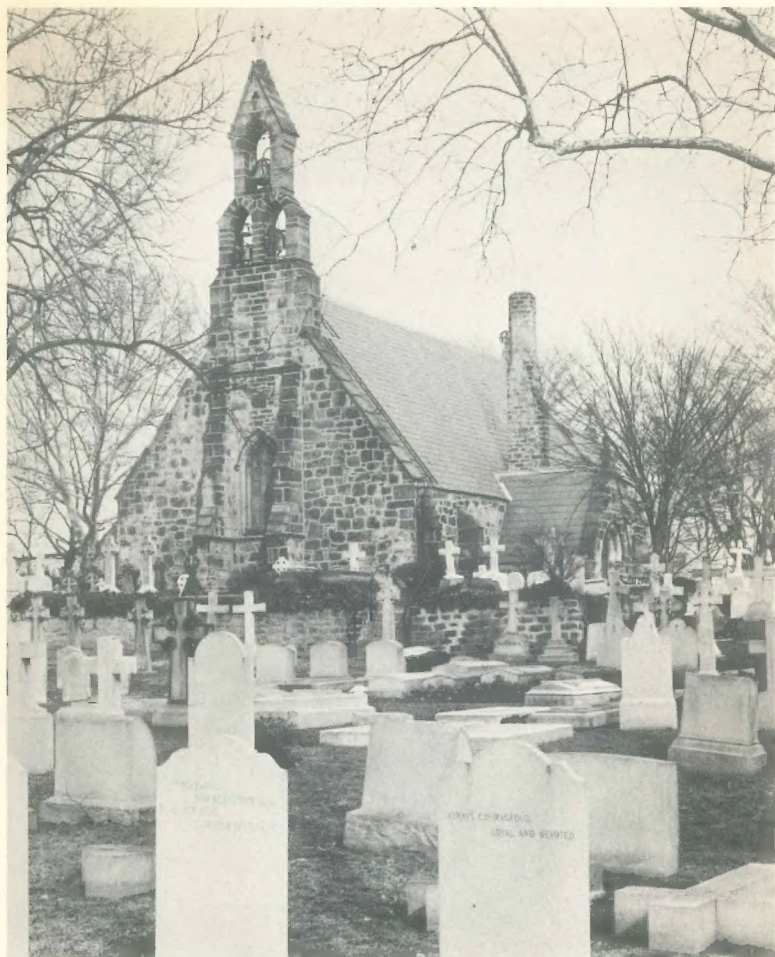


A Brief History and Guide to the Church of Saint James the Less



Church of St. James the Less
Hunting Park Avenue at Clearfield Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19132

A
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to the Church of
Saint James the Less

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*For we know that if our earthly house
of this tabernacle were dissolved, we
have a building of God, an house not
made with hands, eternal in the
heavens.*

2 Corinthians V.1.

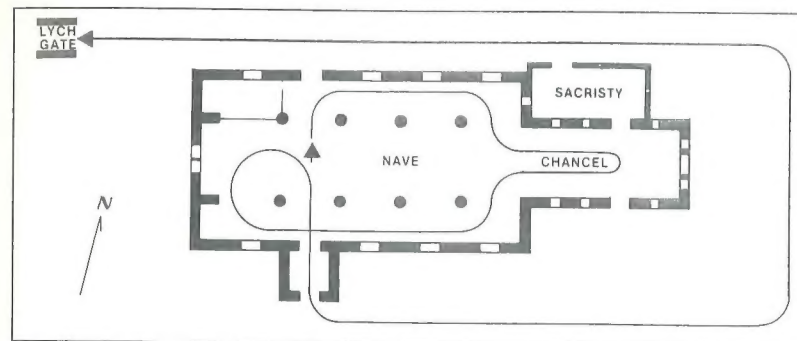


Detail of Confessional, St. James the Less.

Preface

The brief history and guide to the church of St. James the Less which follows was originally intended to be only four pages in length, but the most minimal description of St. James the Less defies such condensation. The guide was written presuming that the reader had reached the South Porch before discovering that the guide existed. Therefore, starting in the center of the Nave seemed logical.

The guide follows the route indicated below:



The superscript numbers in the text are references to listings in the Gifts and Memorials section starting on page 22.

The annotations in brackets appearing in the Gifts and Memorials section refer the reader to specific pages or dates in the material listed in the Bibliography. This system was used to avoid cluttering the text pages with footnotes. For the cross-reference key, see the Bibliography on page 25.

My sincere thanks go to the Rev. Fr. Clayton K. Hewett for his tolerance and understanding when the project, which was started in 1981 and was supposed to take only one month to complete, continued for over a year; to Millicent E. Norcross Berghaus (Mrs. John E.W.) for providing most of the basic research material on which this history and guide is based; to my wife Lyn for her helpful comments, corrections, and improvements on my drafts; and to Marguerite A. Zulick and Dr. Richard Mitchell for their invaluable editorial assistance.

Paul W. Kayser,
Haddonfield, New Jersey,
February 1983

Welcome to St. James the Less

The clergy and parishioners of the Church of St. James the Less welcome you to the birthplace of the Gothic Revival in American church design. In 1846, when construction began under the supervision of the Philadelphia tea merchant, Robert Ralston, a genuine turning point had been reached. The romantic "Gothick" designs employed by Maximilian Godefroy in Baltimore and Richard Upjohn in New York yielded place to a new consciousness bent on capturing the accurate essence of the medieval Catholic church.

John Mason Neale, the Anglican clergyman who founded the Ecclesiological movement in England and who followed the growth of St. James the Less with interest, once observed that Catholic art is often a gateway to Catholic truth. It is helpful to remember this on visits to Gothic Revival churches. The flowers and lights on the altar, the roodscreen with its surmounting crucifix, the brilliant hues of stained-glass windows, the gleam of decorated tiles on walls and floors—these and so much more are elements whose revival we owe in large part to Dr. Neale.

As one stands in the west of the nave and looks eastward, the symbolic unity which lies at the heart of Catholic art is made manifest. The worshipper directs his view, as he directs his life, toward the Kingdom of Heaven. As the font by the door symbolizes the Christian's entrance into the life of the Church through Baptism, the roodscreen reminds him that he must pass through the gates of death to attain everlasting life.

A tiny oasis in a land growing ever more secular, the Church of St. James the Less remains committed to its founder's dream. We invite you to share in that mission by worshipping with us today and whenever you are able.

A Brief History of St. James the Less, The Original Church, 1846 to 1850

In Mid-Nineteenth century, the village of Falls of Schuylkill presented a different appearance from the present, and the cemeteries that now cover the hills between it and the city were in their infancy. The Ridge Road had long been a main avenue of travel, but many of the tracts that are now built up in rows of houses were then woodland, or were occupied by country places of considerable size. Here and there only along the Ridge may still be seen a few of the dwellings of an humbler sort that antedated that time.

One of the country places of that day was "Mount Peace," on the site of the present cemetery of the same name. It was the home of Robert Ralston, the leading spirit in the establishment of the church which is the subject of this brief history and guide book.

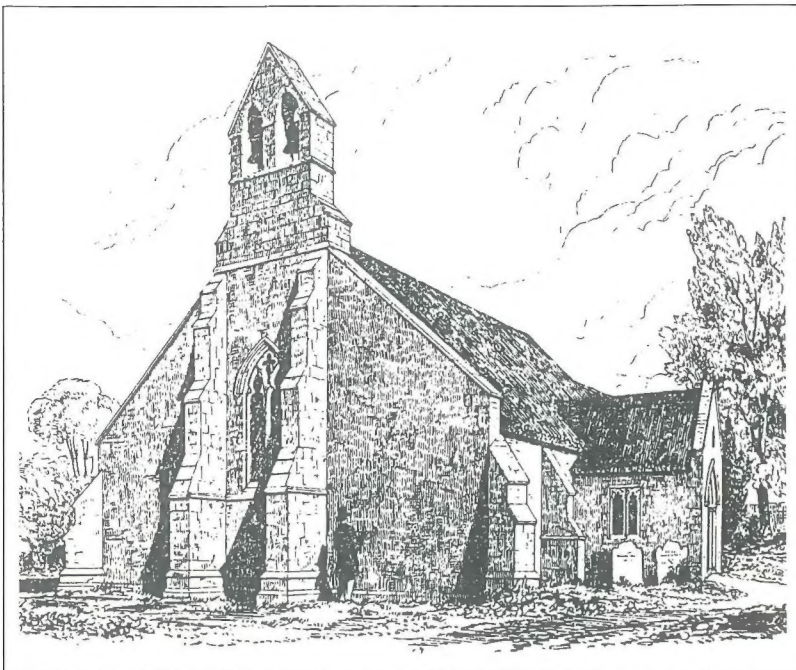
The 30th of April, 1846, for Robert Ralston, was the beginning of a dream. On this day, he and other interested persons met at his home to discuss the possibility of building a church in the area of North Penn Township.

In March of 1846, Ralston had been visited by his friend Samuel Farmar Jarvis, a leader in the Episcopal Church in the United States, who had assisted in the founding of the General Theological Seminary in New York. Jarvis had traveled widely pursuing his studies in the history of the church. While in England he became familiar with the Cambridge Camden Society, a group dedicated to the preservation of the Gothic Church in England and the building of the English country parish church in the New World.

As a result of Jarvis's visit, Ralston was inspired to seek the advice of the Cambridge Camden Society in the building of his contemplated church.

The group of gentlemen, which met April 30th at "Mount Peace," elected a Vestry and chose the name of St. James the Less out of respect for the greater church of St. James, 22nd and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, of which Mr. Ralston and others were members.

The purpose of the meeting was summed up in the minutes—"to



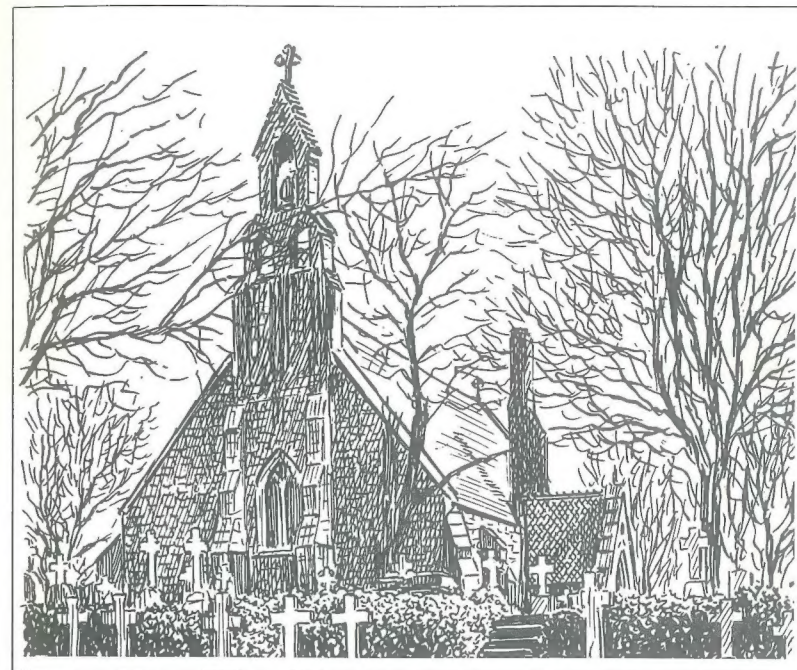
St. Michael's Church, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire, England.

build a church which should be a country house of worship, as similar as possible to the best type of such a church that England could furnish, a veritable home of retirement and meditation, a quiet house of prayer."

Ten days later the Committee on Site and Plans reported the suitability of the present site because of its nearness to the Falls Village and the village across the river; second, its central position in the triangle formed by St. Luke's Church, Germantown, St. Matthew's, Francisville, and St. David's, Manayunk, each $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant; third, its distance away from roads and railroads; fourth, the proximity of the Ridge Road; and fifth, the commanding eminence of the location.

In June the Committee was authorized to accept land if it were offered to them by the Laurel Hill Cemetery Company.

On July 27th, it was reported that a lot of about an acre (350' on Lamb's Tavern Road (Clearfield St.), 400' on Nicetown Lane (Hunt-



West Front, St. James the Less.

ing Park Avenue) and 250' at the base of the triangle) had been offered by the Laurel Hill Cemetery Co. and was accepted with thanks.

Ralston had written the Venerable Thomas Thorp, President of the Cambridge Camden Society, asking for drawings of a church approved by the Society. The Society suggested that the plans which they had previously sent to Dr. Jarvis be used. These Jarvis believed to be the plans of Holy Trinity, Roehampton, England, built in 1841-1842. The plans were proposed at the June Meeting of the Vestry and were approved, authorizing the erection of the church at a cost of not more than \$3,000. The contractor was to be Mr. John E. Carver.

Ralston immersed himself in study and research in Ecclesiology. He communicated with, and was visited by, the Rev. W. R. King, member of the Society and an English clergyman.

The summer of 1846 was spent raising funds and getting ready for construction. The amount to be spent was raised to \$5,000, and Mr.

Ralston was a heavy contributor. There were disagreements among the Vestry for some wished to "raise the walls higher and depress the roof." Ralston stood his ground, campaigning to build the church strictly according to the English plans. He corresponded frequently with the Rev. Benjamin Webb, and in August 1846 was told that the plans being used were not those of Holy Trinity, Roehampton, but were designs for a church adapted from St. Mary's, Arnold.

In October the estimates for building the church were approved. Each Vestryman had already been asked to raise \$200.00 toward its erection. The cost had now reached \$6,000. The contract for the church was signed, setting July 1847 as the completion date. Finally, on the 28th of October 1846, the cornerstone was laid by the Rt. Rev. Alonzo Potter, D.D.

Ralston and Benjamin Webb, of the English Ecclesiological Society, successor to the Cambridge Camden Society, corresponded frequently during the last weeks of 1846. Webb was encouraging the founding of an American Ecclesiological Society so that the publications of the English group could be circulated in the United States. It was in December of 1846 that Webb informed Ralston the plans had been mixed up and that the model for St. James the Less was St. Michael's Church, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire, England, a truly ancient church built circa 1230.

By 1850, not \$6,000 but \$30,000 had been spent. The Vestry had added stained glass windows and other appointments.

The same year the following resolution was passed: "Resolved: that the thanks of the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestry of the Church of St. James the Less, near the Falls of the Schuylkill, be tendered to the Rev. Benjamin Webb, Honorable Secretary of the Ecclesiological (late Cambridge Camden) Society, for the advice so frequently given toward the erection of the Church of St. James the Less, according to the very beautiful and appropriate plans, elevations and designs originally furnished by the said Society."

On Trinity Sunday, the 26th of May, 1850, the Church was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. Alonzo Potter D.D.

The purpose of the Ecclesiological Society in providing the New World with a truly Gothic church had been fulfilled, and Robert Ralston's dream had become reality.

Guide To The Nave And Chancel Of St. James the Less

As one first stands in the center of the Nave of St. James the Less, the impact of the massive medieval architecture, the quiet, the dim light, and the faint hint of incense combine to transport one backward in time. This tiny church, the Nave and aisles only 30'4" wide and 61'6" long, is built of rough dressed stone with walls two-and-a-half feet thick. The heavy arches supporting the interior walls are carried on short stout pillars alternately round and octagonal, 18 inches in diameter, and only 11 feet apart. The long sloping roof, borne on massive oak beams and supported over the Nave by a seven-sided truss of an ancient pattern, rises into a dimly lighted peak. There are no clerestory windows here to illuminate the Nave, as one might expect in a town church, St. James the Less being a true replica of a 13th century rural English parish church.

The fabric of the church remains essentially unchanged from the original church as consecrated in 1850. The original floor of Minton tiles, though taken up in 1913 to permit the installation of a central heating system and a concrete sub-floor to reduce dampness, was re-laid as closely as possible to the original pattern.

The pews of richly carved oak are original and reflect the influence of the *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica, A Series of Working Designs for the Furniture, Fittings, and Decorations of Churches and their Precincts*, prepared by William Butterfield for the Cambridge Camden Society in 1847.

The windows in the church have undergone the greatest change. Originally they were glazed with diamond-shaped clear glass panes, cast in a floral pattern, and set in lead. Over the years, one by one the windows were filled with the stained glass we see today. Only one of the tiny double-lancet aisle windows of the Early English style retains the original glazing. West of the North Door, hidden behind the ranks of organ pipes, and only visible from outside the church, is the last remaining bit of the original glass supplied by Powel's White Friars Glassworks, London, c. 1847.

The lighting in the Nave, Art Nouveau in style, is from the middle period of St. James the Less, 1901-1950, having been installed in 1913

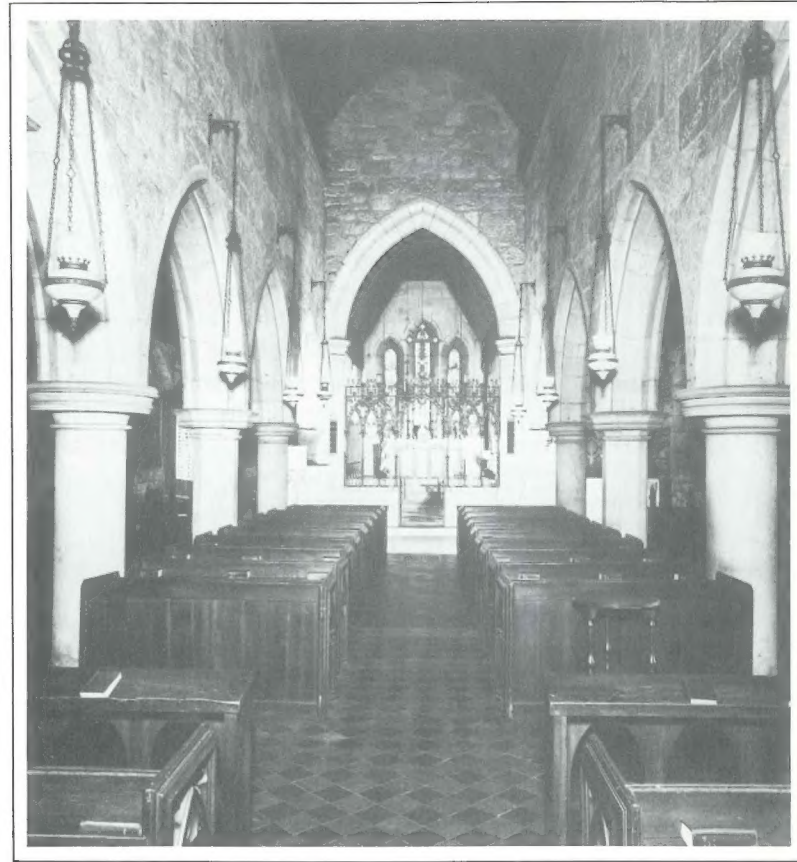


The Nave, St. James the Less, c. 1870.

when the heating and lighting of the church were “modernized.” In 1869, it was suggested that gas illumination be installed, but there is no indication that the church was ever lighted by gas. In 1885, oil lamps were installed, hung on brackets and in the same position as the electric fixtures of today. The red streaking at the base of the arches over the capitals gives mute testimony to the routine striking of the sulfur matches used in lighting them. Originally, the Nave was illuminated by two or three Gothic-style chandeliers, each of which held twelve candles.

The North Aisle

The first window east of the North Door is from the middle period



The Nave, St. James the Less, c. 1946.

of St. James the Less, 1901-1950. Made in America, it depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. The window is probably the work of Alfred Godwin, c. 1909.¹⁸

The middle window of the North Aisle is from the early period of the church, 1851-1900. Made in England, it is a good example of English church glass of the period. The window depicts the Annunciation and the Nativity in the left panel, the Resurrection and the Ascension in the right panel. This is the second oldest stained-glass aisle window in the church, having been installed in 1874.⁶

The eastern window of the North Aisle is also from the early period, c. 1876. It is of English make and attributed to N.H.J. Westlake. The

left light depicts Abraham and the Three Strangers, Isaac and Rebecca; the Resurrection of the Christ is depicted in the right.⁹

The Shrine of St. James the Less in the eastern corner of the North Aisle is from the modern period, after 1950. It is the work of the Brotherhood of the Servants of the Lord, c.1974.³²

The window at the east end of the North Aisle is from the middle period. The glazing is English, the work of John Hardman of Birmingham, England. The window depicts Christ as The Good Shepherd. There was no opening at this location in the original church. The single lancet opening was built specifically for this memorial to the Reverend Dr. Robert Ritchie, Rector of St. James the Less from 1870 to 1907. A gift of the Vestry, the window was dedicated on St. Andrews Day, 1907. When the window was installed it was lighted naturally since it faced on a small open court formed by the east wall of the North Aisle, the north wall of the Choir, and the west wall of the Vestry. The present Sacristy was erected in 1929 on the site of the original Vestry and incorporating the small open court. This window together with the two windows in the north wall of the Choir became internal to the building at that time.

The pulpit is from the early period, c. 1895, made from Indiana limestone. It was designed by Mr. Charles M. Burns, Vestryman of St. James the Less and Architect of the Memorial Church of The Advocate.¹⁵

The Choir and Chancel

The Rood Screen from the early period was presented in 1878.¹⁰ It is a truly fine work. Designed by Charles M. Burns, it is fabricated of copper, brass and iron, and set with semi-precious stones. It replaced the original wood Rood Screen which had prompted a comment in the *Ecclesiologist* in May 1847; "There is to be a well-intentioned though unsuccessful Rood Screen; but the error will, we trust, be rectified."

The decorated Chancel ceiling needs to be viewed from several places in the Choir.¹⁰ In her book *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture*, Phoebe Stanton observed, "In 1878, St. James the Less received its most successful enrichment when the roof of the Chancel was decorated; a Choir of Angels was painted above the



Rood Screen and Pulpit, St. James the Less.

Altar, and plant and abstract ornament was painted over the choir. The artist who executed these delightful pre-Raphaelite figures and the design of the palms and lilies is unknown."

The two single lancet windows in the north wall of the Choir are from the early period, c. 1874. The artist who rendered them is unknown. Presumably of Munich stained glass, they have in recent years been classified as English. The western window of the pair portrays the boy Christ with young John the Baptist; the eastern window depicts St. Agnes.⁷

The Sanctuary of St. James the Less is breathtaking in spite of its small size; the great East Window almost fills the end wall; the Altar nearly spans the width of the building; the appointments of silver, bronze, and brass sparkle with semi-precious stones.

The Sanctuary has undergone the greatest change. Originally there was only a simple brownstone Altar bearing a plain Cross with two

candlesticks on the ledge behind the Altar, backed by the Reredos of the Minton tiles, the Sedilia in the southeastern corner, and the windows filled with clear glass.¹ In more or less chronological order, the enrichments of the Sanctuary were made as follows:

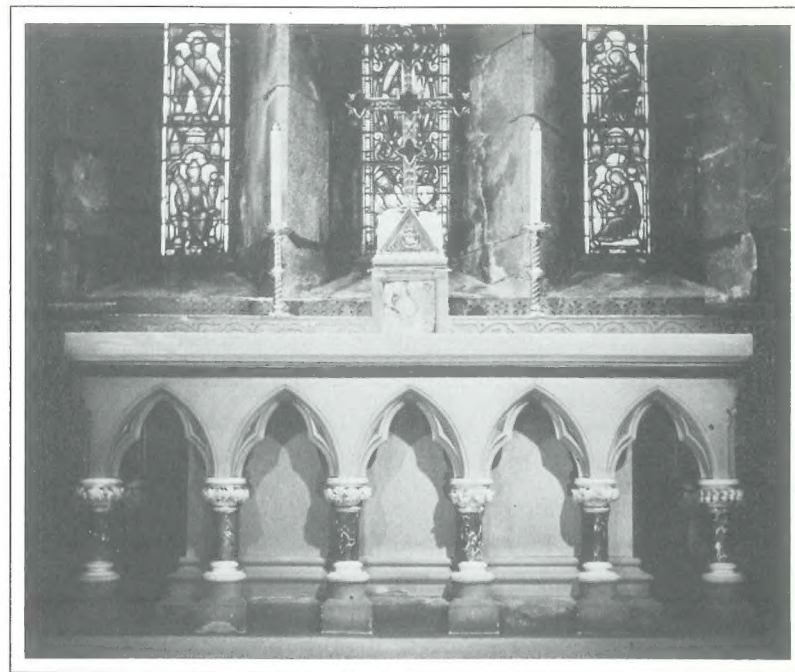
The glorious triplet East Window is French. It is the work of Henri Gerente probably the foremost stained glass artisan of his day. The central light is a Jesse window portraying Jesse recumbent at the bottom, David, Solomon, the Virgin and Child, and Christ; at the top the Dove descends. The left panel depicts the four evangelical prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Arranged in the right panel are the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The *New York Ecclesiologist* in September 1851 commented on this window; "He (Henri Gerente) has produced a window which for effective beauty we do not hesitate to say is unsurpassed in this country; it has unity of design and unity of effect together with that sparkling gem-like appearance which is so characteristic of much of the glass of the middle ages, especially some in Canterbury and many of the French Cathedrals."

Henri Gerente's fame was based primarily on the projects in which he had been involved in France. He won his first prize for design in 1841 and executed glass in Notre Dame de Bon Secours, near Rouen, and Notre Dame de la Couture at LeMans. In 1847, he won a competition for the repair and restoration of the glass in the Sainte-Chapelle, Paris. He had worked at Saint-Denis and Ely Cathedral, and in 1849 received a contract to fill two windows in Canterbury Cathedral. St. James the Less is fortunate to have this window, for Gerente died late in 1849 soon after having executed this work. The window is signed Alfred Gerente, Paris, 1849, in the right hand panel, and bears the initials AG in the central panel, indicating that the work was completed by Alfred Gerente, Henri's brother, who took over operation of the studio after Henri's death.

The East Window, given by Henry Farnum, was installed in 1850, the first and finest enrichment of the church in the early period following consecration on Trinity Sunday 1850.²

The Altar was subject to almost continuous enrichment in the early period. The Super-Altar was added in 1858 as a memorial to Robert Ralston, who had died earlier that year.⁴ The Altar was enlarged in



The Altar, St. James the Less.

1880 by building around the original an elaborate Altar consisting of a massive slab of white marble supported on columns of black marble with carved capitals; the original Altar remained untouched and may still be seen through the columns of the new Altar.¹⁰ That same year, 1880, the elaborate jewelled Cross and Cover for the Tabernacle was added.¹¹

In 1849 James Farnum had presented two candlesticks for the Altar. In 1887 six additional candlesticks of brass were placed on the Altar at the same time the two brass chandeliers were installed.¹³ The eight candlesticks seen today were presented in 1896.¹⁶ That same year the Vestry passed the following resolution; "Whereas, there is a desire of a number of persons interested in the preservation and perpetuation of the original forms of usages of the Church of St. James the Less, in their primitive customs and places: —Resolved, That there shall be always two real candles with their candlesticks to stand on the Re-Table or Super-Altar as in former times; and that however many more lights or candles be used at anytime, that those two shall continue as distinctive Altar lights as in the primitive usage

of the Church.” It was the understanding of the Vestry that the candlesticks presented by Dr. Stocker (Dated 1884) be the ones to be used. The bronze flower urns are modern, c. 1970.²⁹

The Piscina in the northeast corner of the Sanctuary and the Credence on the south wall were both installed in 1887.¹² The Piscina is now covered and used as a second credence, the need for the Piscina in the church having been eliminated when the new Sacristy was built.

The Presence light is from the early period, c. 1899.¹⁷ Since the Tabernacle for reserving the Sacrament has existed since 1880, one can only speculate that this Presence light replaced one of an earlier date.

In the middle period, 1901-1950, there were only three changes made in the Sanctuary. The stained glass window above the Credence on the south wall was placed c. 1918. An early work of Nicola D’Ascenzo, it depicts in the three medallions: Faith, Hope, and Charity.²¹ In 1921, the Communion Rail of bronze and wood was installed, replacing the moveable wood rails that had been in use.²³ The stained glass window in the north wall above the Bishop’s chair was placed c. 1925. It is also a D’Ascenzo of exceptionally fine quality. In its three medallions are depicted: Self-control—Abraham and Isaac; Loyalty—David and Jonathan; Courage—Daniel in the Lion’s Den.²⁴

There are two lancet windows in the south side of the Choir. The easternmost is English, from the middle period, c. 1920. It depicts Christ healing the blind man.²² The westernmost is yet another D’Ascenzo window, extremely rich and jewel-like, of the middle period, c. 1929. Its three medallions portray: The Walk to Emmaus, the Resurrection, and Christ Enthroned.²⁶

The South Aisle

The Shrine of Mary Queen of Heaven is from the modern period. The triptych is the work of the Brotherhood of the Servants of the Lord, c. 1974.³¹

The Lady Altar was erected in the middle period of St. James the Less. The design was adapted by Wilfred Edwards Anthony from an ancient tomb in Ravenna, Italy. The work was executed in Italy, of Botticino marble, and was consecrated on the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, 1931.²⁷ The Altar has in the center a cross from whose arms depend small characters, Alpha and Omega, which divides it into two

panels, each showing a lamb. The design represents the faithful who are fed by the Good Shepherd.

In the niche adjacent to the Lady Altar is a carved gilt statue of Our Lady of the Assumption. It is an eighteenth century work from the Portuguese Catholic colony of Goa, founded by St. Francis Xavier.³⁰

The eastern window of the South Aisle is from the early period of St. James the Less, c. 1874. It is English and depicts in the left panel Christ Blessing the Little Children, and the Good Shepherd; in the right panel the Raising of Lazarus, and Salome Pleading for Her Sons James and John.⁸

The middle window of the South Aisle is from the early period and it is the first of the aisle windows to be filled with stained glass, c. 1871. It is also of English make and depicts St. John to the left, St. James the Less to the right. At this writing, one can still discern in the sill below the window the remnants of the original attribution for the window “. . . les Thomas Ad . . .” which clearly matches the carving, Charles Thomas Adams, on the monument directly below the window in the Adams burial lot.⁵

The window just east of the South Door is from the middle period, c. 1914. It is English and attributed to the Charles Kempe Studios. It depicts St. Michael in the left panel, St. Gabriel in the right.¹⁹

The window to the west of the South Door is of American make of the middle period, c. 1915. The window depicts The Blessed Virgin in the left panel, St. Joseph in the right.²⁰

The Font adjacent to the South Door is the original. Photographs of the early period show the Font in the Cross Aisle connecting the North and South Doors next to the column on the north side of the Nave. The location in which we find the Font today suits the tradition of a medieval church, where the Font stands by the door to symbolize the Christian’s entrance into the life of the Church through Baptism. The cover of wrought iron, brass and oak is from the early period, c. 1894.¹⁴

The Confessional at the western end of the South Aisle is from the middle period, c. 1936. The enclosure of oak was designed by Wilfred Edwards Anthony.²⁸

The exquisite West Window is French, the work of Alfred Gerente. It is from the early period, c. 1851. There are four medallions in each lancet. In the left panel the "Keys to Peter" scene, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are shown. In the right panel the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Apparition to the Shepherds, and the Epiphany are portrayed. St. James the Less is fortunate in having two stained glass windows of the quality of the East and West windows rendered by the Gerente brothers.³

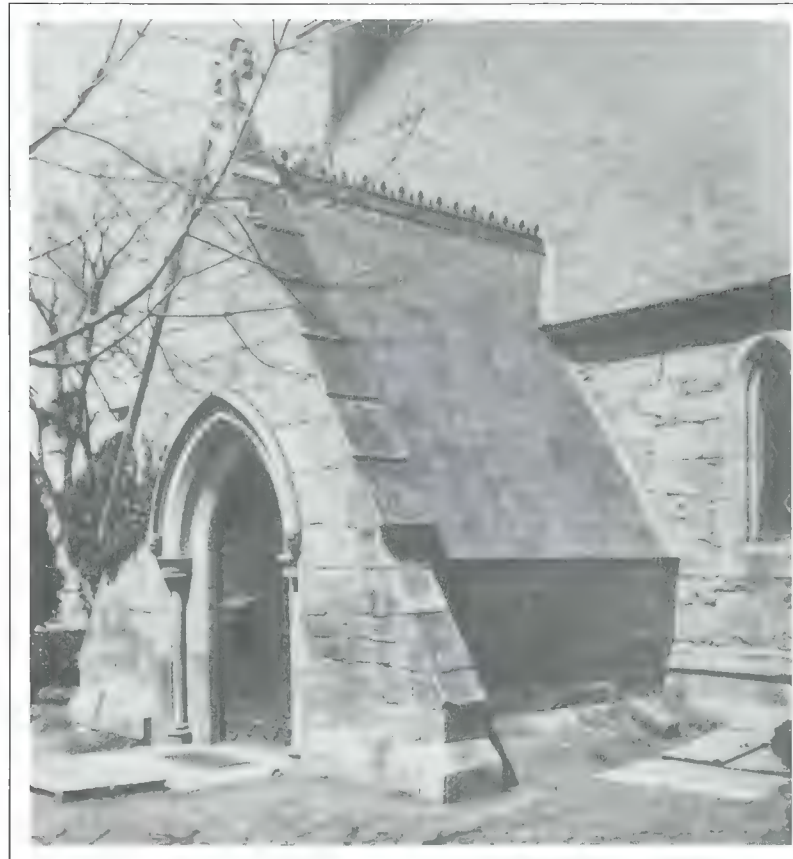
The West Window was presented as a memorial to Robert Ralston Cox, the nephew of Robert Ralston. Following a visit to Philadelphia, Cox drowned in the Ohio River on his way home to Wisconsin. He was building a church, St. John Chrysostom, in Delafield, Wisconsin. St. John Chrysostom, although of frame construction, appears to have been substantially influenced by St. James the Less; both are blessed with West Windows dedicated to Robert Ralston Cox.

The first Organ, the work of a Mr. Corrie, was installed at the eastern end of the South Aisle where the Lady Altar now stands. In 1858 Mr. Corrie was again engaged to enlarge the Organ. At that time it was moved to the western end of the South Aisle where the Confessional is now located. The enlarging of the Organ necessitated breaking through the internal buttress to link the console to the ranks of pipes. This opening, later dressed off, now provides the priest's entry to the Confessional.

In 1876 a new Organ was acquired from Messrs. Odell of New York. It was situated where we find the Organ today with the ranks of pipes positioned in the westernmost bay of the North Aisle. In 1927 the present Organ was given. The Organ was built by Hillgreen, Lane and Co. of Alliance, Ohio under the direction of Gustav Doring, former Director of Gifts for the Carnegie Foundation. The case of oak surmounted by two polychrome angels was designed by Wilfred Edwards Anthony; it was built by William F. Ross of Boston.²⁵

Before leaving, pause and look about St. James the Less. This tiny Gothic structure has been maintained by Vestries devoted to thoughtful and appreciative care of the fabric of the building and the grounds. They have been steadfast in the performance of their sacred trust, the maintenance of a church that embodies the essence of the medieval Catholic Church. The interior of St. James the Less emphasizes the real presence of God as well as His Kingdom. It is a sacred place of worship calling one to devotion, meditation and prayer.

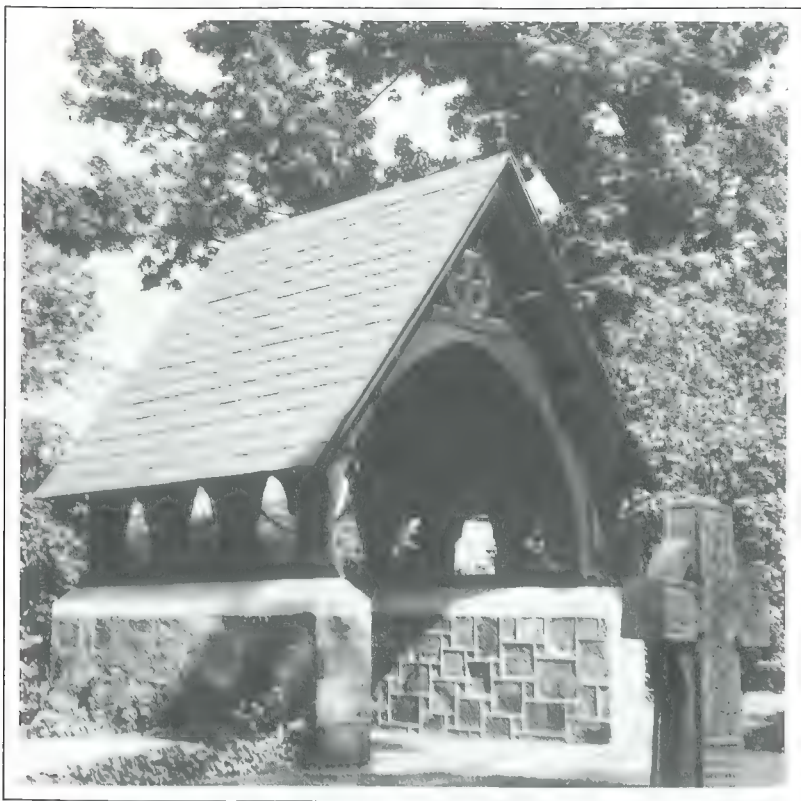
The Church and Its Precincts



South Porch, St. James the Less, c. 1865.

One usually enters and leaves St. James the Less through the South Porch. That being the case, we will begin our examination of the exterior of the church at that point.

First, there are differences between St. James the Less and St. Michael's, Long Stanton. St. James the Less was based on St. Michael's as originally constructed, c. 1230, not St. Michael's of the 1850's, by which time it had undergone many changes and was nearly derelict. The roof of St. Michael's is thatched; here it is slate for very practical reasons. The windows in St. Michael's are mostly of the Decorated Style, reflecting changes made in the 14th and 15th centuries; here they



Lych Gate, St. James the Less.

are in the Early English style as they would have been in 1230. Other differences will be dealt with as we discuss specific aspects of the building.

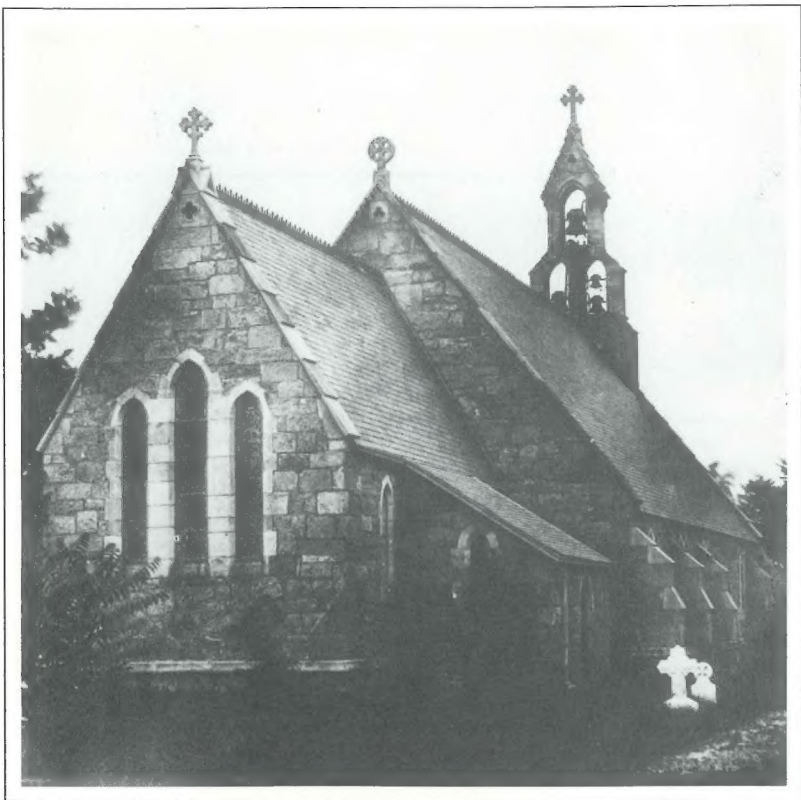
The South Porch of St. James the Less is much smaller in scale than its counterpart at St. Michael's. This was an innovation of G.G. Place, who did the measured drawings of St. Michael's for the Cambridge Camden Society. The modification produced a structure aesthetically more pleasing. The chimney was added in 1887, probably under the guidance of Charles M. Burns. It was blended into the structure so carefully that it appears to be part of the original building. That there was heat in the church prior to 1887 is a matter of record. The minutes of the Vestry first mention heating in 1855, and floor furnaces show in early photographs of the interior. How they were vented escapes detection. There are no signs of chimneys in photographs of the exterior



Wanamaker Memorial Tower, St. James the Less.

prior to 1887. That both additions were well conceived is reflected in their reappearance in Gothic Revival churches of later date.

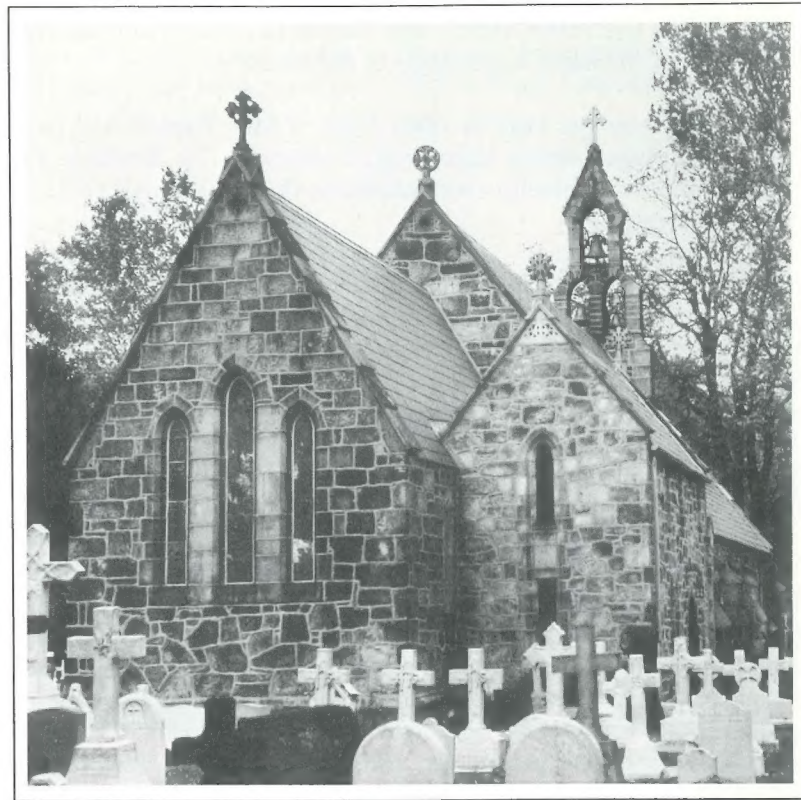
Follow the path toward the east end of the church. The flagstones on which you walk were laid in 1891; prior to that, plank walkways were laid in the winter. As you pass the middle window on the south side, note the monument to Charles Thomas Adams which corresponds to the inscription inside on the sill of the window. This monument reflects the influence of the *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica* as do not most of the early monuments in the burial ground. Some of the monuments were considered so unique in the late 1800's that they became the subject of stereographic photography. However, at times the "modernists" inflicted their ideas in marble; as a result, since 1886, the Vestry has reserved the right of approval on all monuments placed in the church grounds.



East Front and Vestry, St. James the Less, c. 1855.

The triplet East Window when viewed from outside the church seems to diminish in size. The illusion is caused by the extreme thickness of the church walls.

In the northeast angle of the Nave and Chancel stands the new Sacristy, built in 1929 on the site of the original Vestry. The Sacristy was given by Elizabeth Dobson Riddle as a memorial to her parents, John and Sarah Schofield Dobson. The original Vestry was a tiny one-story stone structure with a shed roof. St. Michael's Long Stanton, the prototype for St. James the Less, had no Vestry. Unlike the South Porch, the Vestry was not a modification in design recommended by the Cambridge Camden Society but an innovation of John E. Carver, the builder. While the new Sacristy is certainly more comfortable and efficient, the scale of the original Vestry seems to have made a more fitting addition to St. James the Less.



East Front and Sacristy, St. James the Less

The church was robbed in 1855, the thieves gaining access by breaking the window in the Vestry. To prevent further depredations the poor box was removed from inside the church and affixed to the outside of the door to the South Porch.

As you pass the North Door take a moment to look at the last remaining bit of the original glass in the window just to the west of the North Door.

The West Front of St. James the Less is the one most widely recognized. The angled buttresses at the corners, the two massive buttresses flanking the West Window lead the eye up to the two-tiered bell cote and the Cross. The bell cote on St. Michael's has only two apertures for two bells; here there is room for a set of four bells. The bell cote was rebuilt in 1896, complete with a new Cross. The original Cross can

be seen by the Lych Gate. At the time the bell cote was rebuilt the bells were recast by McShane & Company of Baltimore.

The Lych Gate was built in 1886, a gift of Mrs. Francis A. Lewis. The heavy crossed chains have evoked comment. To eliminate any misconceptions, the chains were installed so that the grounds could be closed to carriages.

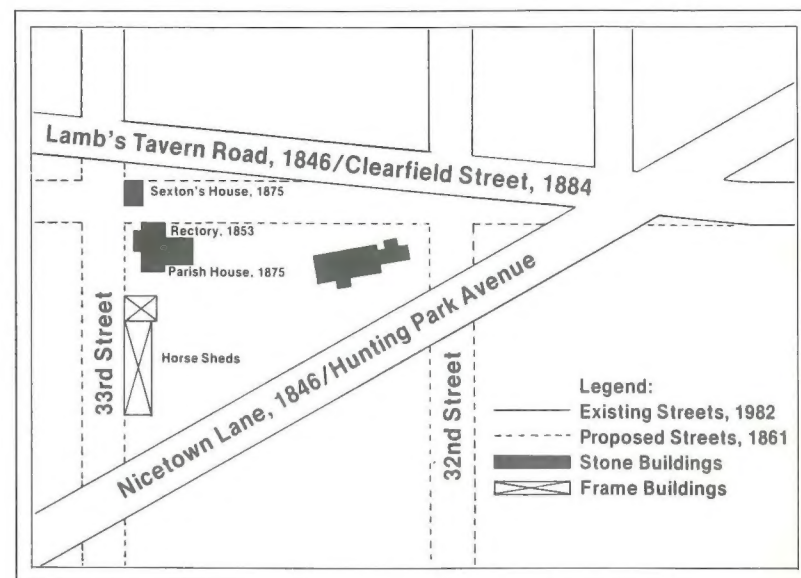
Situated near the southwest entrance to the grounds is the Wanamaker Memorial Tower. It was built in 1909 by Rodman Wanamaker as a memorial to his brother Thomas. Of granite, the tower, which rises more than fifty feet, houses a carillon of fifteen bells; a chiming clock which sounds the hours and quarter hours, a small chapel, and the family mausoleum. Most notable among the members of the family interred here is John Wanamaker, the famous Philadelphia merchant.

In 1846, St. James the Less was built on a triangular plot of ground approximately one acre in size. Probably as a precaution, the church was positioned close to the south side of the property and well back from the eastern tip of the lot. As late as 1862, Smedley's Atlas shows a plan for this part of the city with all the east-west streets extending west to Ridge Avenue and all of the north-south streets in the area running from the railroad on the north to Mt. Vernon Cemetery or farther to the south, forming a grid. The lanes bordering St. James the Less were shown by dashed lines indicating an intent on the part of the city planners to eliminate them, a not uncommon event in sparsely populated areas when developed for residential use. The church was located on the property at what would have become the southwest corner of Thirty-Second and Clearfield Streets if the plan had been followed.

Prior to 1853, a strip of ground was acquired at the western end of the original property, extending the triangular lot to the proposed bed of Thirty-Third Street. This tripled the size of the grounds to the three acres owned today.

That Clearfield Street would eventually follow the bed of Lamb's Tavern Road must still have been in question in 1853 when the first Rectory was built, the site of Rectory being at the southeast corner of Thirty-Third and Clearfield Streets. As late as 1884, Hopkin's Atlas was still showing a proposed Thirty-Second Street cutting through the

eastern tip of the grounds. This was highly unlikely after the 1860's when the Ralston estate to the south, across Nicetown Lane (Hunting Park Ave.), had been acquired for Mount Peace Cemetery.



Site Plan of 1875, St. James the Less.

The Sexton's house, Rectory, Parish House, and horse sheds were all positioned along the western end of the property. The first Rectory was built in 1853 and enlarged in 1874 by the addition of the Parish House. Reference to a hall is made in the minutes prior to 1874. If the hall existed as a building separate from the Rectory, it was probably situated between the Rectory and the horse sheds, which were located in the southwest angle of the grounds. The Sexton's house in the northwest angle of the grounds was built in 1874 and enlarged in 1901. Of the group of buildings only the Sexton's house remains.

The present Rectory and Parish House on the north side of Clearfield Street were built in 1916. The Parish House was given by Mrs. H. Wilson Catherwood as a memorial to her daughter Caroline Reynolds Tucker; the Rectory was a gift of the Vestry. The new buildings are situated on a plot of ground given by Mrs. Samuel D. Riddle and Miss Sarah W. Fiske in 1914.

Gifts & Memorials

1. 1849: James Farnum, Esq. gave two candlesticks to be placed on the ledge behind the Altar; in the same year James Minton gave the tiles for the Reredos, his firm having supplied the floor tiles for St. James the Less. [V 9/10/1849, V 6/1/1850, V 12/14/63]

EARLY PERIOD 1850-1899

2. 1850: Henry Farnum, Esq. presented the East Window. [S 106, S107, V 9/9/1850]
3. 1852: Ellis Yarnall presented the West Window on behalf of the friends of Robert Ralston Cox who had contributed towards its acquisition. [W 14, V 11/20/1857]
4. 1858: James C. Kempton presented the Super-Altar as a memorial to Robert Ralston who had died that year. [W 14, V 3/22/1858, V 5/6/1858]
5. 1871: Thomas Adams presented a stained glass window as a memorial to his son Charles Thomas Adams. [V 4/10/1871, Willet]
6. 1874: Mrs. Hermon Griswold Batterson presented a stained glass window. [V 6/8/1874, Willet]
7. 1874: Rev. Robert Ritchie presented two stained glass windows as memorials to his parents. [V 6/8/1874, Willet]
8. 1874: George M. Conarrore presented a stained glass window. [V 6/8/1874, Willet]
9. 1874: A stained glass window was given as a memorial to Thomas Hanson Belt and his wife Eliza Key Belt by their children. [V 12/14/1874, Willet]
10. 1878: Moro Phillips made three major contributions to St. James the Less between 1878 and 1880 as memorials to his wife Emily Louise: the Rood Screen, the illuminated Chancel ceiling and the enlargement of the Altar. [S 106, S 107, W 14, V 5/28/1878]
11. 1880: The Cross and Cover for the Altar was presented as a memorial to Dr. William S. Helmuth; probably the gift of his wife, Mary Key Helmuth
12. 1887: An anonymous donor presented the Piscina and Credence. The latter as a memorial to Mary Dobson Fiske. [W 15, V 4/15/1886, V 5/12/1887]
13. 1887: Moro Phillips, the younger, presented two chandeliers for the Sanctuary, as a memorial to his father, and six candlesticks for the Altar. The latter were replaced in 1896 and have disappeared. [W 15, V 5/12/1887]
14. 1894: The Font Cover, probably made to the design of Charles M. Burns, was presented by persons unknown as a memorial to M.H.R. [V 3/29/1894]
15. 1895: John G. Parks, Atherton Blight, and Miss Elizabeth Blight presented the Pulpit as a memorial to George Blight, Vestryman and Warden of St. James the Less. [W 15, V 2/11/1895, V 2/26/1895, V 5/13/1895]
16. 1896: Dr. A. E. Stocker, Mrs. James B. Fry, Mrs. Bloomfield McIlvaine, and Charlotte H. Belt each presented a pair of candlesticks for the Altar as memorials to Caroline De T. Stocker, James Barnet Fry, Josephine Clement Burton, and Mary Key Helmuth. [B 37, W 10, W 11, V 12/14/1896]
17. 1899: Mr. & Mrs. Worden presented the Presence Light as a memorial to Florence Worden. [B 40, V 4/6/1899]

MIDDLE PERIOD 1900-1949

18. 1909: Dr. C. H. Vinton presented a stained glass window as a memorial to his wife Maria Conarrore Vinton. [V 5/23/1908, V 5/10/1909, Willet]
19. 1914: Mrs. George M. Conarrore presented a stained glass window as a memorial to her husband. [V 5/23/1908, V 12/8/1913, V 7/5/1914, V 12/14/1914, Willet]
20. The donor(s) of this window and/or the individual(s) commemorated are lost in history. In 1913, John Mitcheson requested permission to fill the window east of the South Door, site of the Conarrore window, 1914. It is possible this was offered as an alternative. [V 12/8/1913]
21. 1918: The donor(s) of this window, a memorial to Mrs. Alfred C. (Katherine) Harrison is unknown. [B 37, Willet]

22. 1920: The donor(s) of this window, a memorial to the Reverend Edward Shippen Watson, Rector of St. James the Less from 1860-1869, is unknown. [B 12, B 37]
23. 1921: Alonzo P. Smith presented the Communion Rail as a memorial to his mother, Elizabeth Sutton Smith, father, John Smith, and son, A.P. Smith, Jr. [B 37, W 15, V 4/15/1886]
24. 1925: The donor(s) of this window, a memorial to Alfred C. Harrisons, Jr., is unknown. [B 38, Willet]
25. 1927: The donor(s) of the organ case, a memorial to William W. Harding and Catherine B. Harding, is unknown. [B 27, B 38, V 6/14/1858, V 5/1/1876, V 5/12/87, V 9/22/1927]
26. 1929: Blanche Lewis presented a stained glass window as a memorial to her husband, Francis A. Lewis. The last window in the church to be filled with stained glass. [V 2/13/1929]
27. 1931: Mrs. William J. Taylor presented the Lady Altar in memory of six generations of the Newbold family buried in the church yard. [B 29, V 4/29/31]
28. 1936: Matilda Carter presented the Confessional as a memorial to her sister Deborah Jane Carter. [B 39]

MODERN PERIOD 1950-

29. 1970: Celia E. Sugden presented two flower urns for the Altar as a memorial to her husband, Wilfred Sugden.
30. 1973: The Brotherhood of the Servants of the Lord presented the carved statue of Our Lady of the Assumption.
31. 1974: The Brotherhood of the Servants of the Lord presented the triptych of Mary, Queen of Heaven. Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Cooper presented the blue votive candle set for the shrine in memory of Our Lady. The votive candle stand had been presented in 1955 as a memorial to Robert J. Shoemaker by his son.
32. 1974: The Brotherhood of the Servants of the Lord wrought the Shrine of St. James the Less and presented the hangings and kneeler. Gertrude McCormick presented the statue of St. James the Less in memory of her husband James McCormick. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rutherford, Jr. presented the kneeling desk in memory of their infant son William Lewis Rutherford.

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[Cross-reference key]

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Detail of South Portal, St. James the Less.